



The WEST (Work, English Study, and Travel) Program Eighteen-Month Intern Pilot Program

The Department is pleased to announce that on September 22, 2008, the Governments of the United States and the Republic of Korea signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing an eighteen month work, English language instruction and travel program to be known as the WEST (Work, English Study, and Travel) Program. This innovative reciprocal exchange program will be conducted as a five-year pilot program under which qualifying university students and recent graduates from the Government of the Republic of Korea will enter the United States to study English, participate in internships, and travel independently. The Government of the Republic of Korea will provide reciprocal opportunities for U.S. participants under its Working Holiday Program (WHP). The WEST Program became effective on October 31, 2008.

The first five months for a participant of the WEST Program are devoted to structured English language training (at least 450 classroom hours provided by an accredited language school or university). While pursuing language instruction, participants will also take coursework in American business practices and gain familiarity with business procedures, corporate culture, and general office management issues. Upon completion of these educational requirements, participants will begin a work-based internship of up to twelve month's duration with a corporate, non-profit, academic or other employer. Upon conclusion of the internship, participants will have the opportunity to travel for one month.

The WEST program will be conducted under the existing intern category of the Exchange Visitor Program.

Designation

At this time the Korean government has selected three organizations to pilot the WEST program. As the program grows, the Korean government will consider expanding the number of organizations to pilot the WEST program. However, at this time the Department is not accepting new applications for the WEST Program. Information on the three designated programs may be located at the following sites:

The Association for International Practical Training:
<http://www.aipt.org/programs/KoreaWest/index.htm>

The Council on International Educational Exchange: <http://www.ciee.org/west/index.html>

Intrax WEST Program: <http://intraxwestprogram.com/>

Participant Eligibility Requirements

All participants must meet the following program eligibility requirements:

- Be a citizen of the Republic of Korea.
- Be approved for participation by the Government of the Republic of Korea.
- Be a bona fide post-secondary student or recent graduate. A recent graduate is defined as a Korean citizen who has graduated from a post-secondary college/university in their home country no more than 12 months beyond graduation. The applicant must provide evidence from his/her post-secondary institution of student status or graduation.
- Vocational students pursuing studies at a tertiary level accredited academic institution are not eligible for participation in this program.
- Provide proof of sufficient financial resources, prior to coming to the United States, to support themselves throughout their program and for their return home
- Not be accompanied by spouse or dependents.

(February 25, 2009)